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A CENTURY OF ART 1810-1910

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BY CHARLES RICKETTS

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PREFACE

BETWEEN the years 1810-1910, which have been chosen to limit the scope of this Exhibition, lies more than a century of continuous effort to renew the language of painting and to find for it the acceptance which in former centuries had been achieved by a closer contact between art and the business of life as it was then. If former centuries might be described as eras of Church and State patronage, the nineteenth century is that of isolated and unsupported effort. For this we shall find only a partial parallel in Holland during the seventeenth century, in so far that the little Dutch masters and the moderns have been forced into a direct appeal to the private purchaser, and to the creating of a fashion or appetite for the kind of art which each artist wished to do. The past might therefore be described as the epoch of programme-painting, whilst our period might be termed the period of competitive painting—*i.e.*, competition to secure attention against other artists, other aims, and other schools. The art of Holland lasted seventy years; modern painting has flourished in England and France for over a hundred. A common bond in training and temper made of the little Dutch masters a guild of allied craftsmen; with the exception of Rembrandt, they are of one cast, one epoch, almost all of one temper, and might belong to one guild or family. No such common bond unites, in the two countries under

discussion, the many schools which have flourished during the nineteenth century, nor is there such monotony of range and aim, in England or in France. Competition or public exhibition has led to different results. At first sight one might even say that in modern times there has been a loss of the acquired or traditional accomplishment so noticeable in Holland, and a loss in continuity of aim, did not a closer study reveal a constant return to certain ideals, and the fruitful feud between realism under many disguises and idealism under many names, or, to put it briefly, the struggle between observation put into immediate terms of painting and experience translated into terms of art.

Two aims have moved art ever since its beginning, namely, the wish to conquer facts for their own sake or to express that which lies behind fact. Sometimes the latest effort has been directed into technical channels, sometimes a mere fashion in subject-matter and art has been Classical or Romantic in its objective. Viewed at a distance all can be reduced to a more or less direct appeal to the eye or memory and a love for simple or more complex emotions. Beyond all this one quality counts for most, namely, the essential quality of the artistic temper of the painter. It is the player himself who counts, not the rules of the game; the quality of his intellect and skill, for no fool has ever yet painted a masterpiece. In this the art of the nineteenth century lags behind no other epoch. The battle has been waged between the chief opponents in the artistic game, not with the laggards, and most of the master players have been brought here together—most, not all—grouped within their epoch and country. Both French and English painting emerge out of the ordeal not with one school, like Holland, but with several; not with one aim, but many, each with its separate

character, like the schools of Italy. The nineteenth century has not been an epoch of transition, like the eighteenth; it is a new Renaissance, it is full of the conquest of old kingdoms and the foundation of new ones; it is an epoch of hope and endeavour among the artists at least, for it has been a period when the world had no palaces for its great painters to decorate, no deeds it cared to trust to its great sculptors; the public has favoured only the men who resembled it and bidden the artist make bricks without straw for a livelihood. The modern mind has had little hope, less trust, and no belief in art; it has hugged other ideals. Fortunately the artists have not wavered or lost courage, and we can turn to pictures upon these walls which would take their place in the National Gallery, and upon drawings and bronzes which it were difficult to outclass.

It is a common belief that the development of landscape-painting has been the chief achievement of the last hundred years. This is so far true in that no other epoch has equalled it in the constant effort and success achieved in that direction. But success in a line of endeavour which Delacroix declared to be the minor art of a specialist does not include the whole achievement of the century. We can point to masterpieces in other fields where greater æsthetic and passionate forces are at play. If we can say no painter has surpassed Turner in technical skill, we can say also no sculptor has surpassed Rodin in emotional range. Turner's faculties of invention were immense, but as a designer of landscape he is surpassed by Hokusai, his contemporary, who was also a great figure-draughtsman. There is an un-failing charm in all the work of Corot, a delicate temperance and tenderness, but each of these qualities pass into a higher level of expression, a deeper range of feeling, in the work, of Puvis de

Chavannes. In every field of observation, in the quality of character behind the work, there have been masters in the nineteenth century, men of volcanic force like Hokusai, Goya, and Turner, of profound feeling like Millet and Rodin, poets and visionaries like Rossetti, Delacroix, and Blake; whole movements have been devoted to the search after beauty, beauty of fact, beauty of emotion and thought, and to the revaluation of the scope of art as the emotional equal of the great literature of our time. The vistas opened up to the world by the great musicians have their counterpart in the poetic painters of the century, in Delacroix for instance, and in the soaring art of G. F. Watts. There is the Pre-Raphaelite movement in England, which can be compared in its significance to that outlook upon Nature and Romance which was realised in the poetry of Keats and in the music of Schubert. There have been artists who have ventured to compete with the great Italians in the study of form, whose art moves to a rhythm, such as Ingres and Alfred Stevens, and craftsmen and experimentalists without number working in self-imposed fields of research and along curious byways of endeavour, such as the great caricaturist Daumier, some book-illustrators, and the Impressionists.

Too much of the history of modern painting has been devoted to the battle against the Academic movement in France. Classicism was a reaction within the eighteenth century itself; it has left fine specimens of architecture, but its influence upon painting is on the whole insignificant if one realises that Goya was the contemporary of David and that Classicism has never affected the development of English painting. Of this transitory fashion of a time and place there is practically nothing in this Exhibition. Yet a wholesale condemnation of this school leads to a disregard

of the personality of the artist, that may be exquisite, rare, or even great within the rules of a game, in which we are not for the moment interested. Ingres as a painter is absent here, though well represented as a draughtsman. This is to be regretted ; his absence was unavoidable. Chasseriau counts among the French Classicists, and Paul Baudry also. Chiffart has been included. Let me hasten to add that if these artists, together with Gustave Moreau, form a group apart, only partly interrelated, their position is on the outer edge of Classicism ; each was exigent in the scholarly quality of his workmanship, each was touched by the splendour of Classic art, each was endowed also with an essential and precious quality of "personality," and this counts for most.

The reader must consider this series of notes solely in the light of personal observations. The author's opinions are often not of the latest ; perhaps few critics have thought, in noting the lacunæ of this exhibition, of the forgotten names I have mentioned—that of Baudry, for instance. Other masters are also absent, but their rare works have often passed unobserved in current exhibitions of the International Society. The narrow margin of that which can yet be borrowed from collectors diminishes daily, and many priceless works here shown will never be brought together again ; this is why these desultory notes have been written.

ROOM I

THE OCTAGONAL GALLERY

THE first room is devoted mainly to the major French painters of the Romantic movement. Together with these hang some half-dozen works by Crome and Constable, the latter counting as he does in the progress of French landscape-painting more than he does in the development of English art. The two sketches of Delacroix (No. 1 and No. 4) do not show the influence of Constable; it is a common fault in modern criticism to overstate his influence upon the great French tragic painter. Unimportant as they are in size, these sketches reveal the savage grandeur which characterised Delacroix' pictures and decorations; they bear on the now lost decorations in the old Hôtel de Ville destroyed during the Commune.

The example of Constable, and even of James Ward, count in Gericault's "White Horse" (No. 2), but in the main his art belongs to the Classical tradition. He did not live to bring about the change in French painting which he foresaw. Like Delacroix, his work can only be studied in French museums—it exists nowhere else.

Delicate and intimate in aim, the gentle art of Crome bridges the period in England between Wilson and the early works of Turner and Constable, and "The Cow Tower" (No. 11), one of his masterpieces, is here. In his sense of ground and

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sky Crome stands apart. Turner in some early masterpieces detected and compassed a great deal which Crome seems to have done instinctively, almost unknowingly, but the development of the greater genius lay in other directions. Constable more than Turner broke away from the traditional use of pigment. The admirable sketch for "The Cornfield" (No. 13) and the exquisite sketches Nos. 15 and 22 hardly bear this out, since, despite their characteristic handling, the pigment is still jewelled and the touch shapely, and the colour sonorous and harmonious. This is the case in many of his sketches, yet in his work lay a revolution, and with him we are nearer the current work of to-day than with Cotman, whose famous "Waterfall" (No. 16) hangs in this room, or with J. Michel, whose fine "Windmill" (No. 23) seems by contrast the work of some minor early Dutch master.

The remaining works in Room I. may be said to illustrate the development on French soil of the direct study of nature initiated by Constable. This is true of Daubigny and Courbet; it is not entirely so with Corot or with Millet, who was something more than a painter of landscapes done from nature. Corot's superb "Don Quixote" (No. 8) was painted for Decamps; it is a "central" specimen of his art, almost a summary of his more habitual habits of composition, at least in his more ambitious works. The tradition that Daumier designed the distant figures may be true; their execution reveals only the workmanship of Corot. This canvas would not be out of place in the Louvre or the National Gallery. "The Pool" (No. 7) is a work of surprising sweetness of tone and delicacy of execution. The early specimen, in the Claude manner (No. 28), has only an interest of curiosity: it is out of place in this exhibition.

It was late in life that the chance came to Millet to paint the decorative panels (Nos. 3, 12, 17). Yet, in colour at least, they revert to an earlier method of his; not so in conception or painting. A study for the background of No. 17 is in the Ionides Collection, and, despite the heavy workmanship of his later method displayed in these works, they are full of an idyllic charm. Are the Daphnis and Chloe (No. 17) really the immortal lovers of the old Byzantine townsman who loved the country? Longus comes in the autumn of Greek life to write about its spring, and the eighteenth century, the first Empire, have each intervened to turn him into a contemporary. Millet, who loved Poussin and Virgil, has seen them anew. To the student of painting there are enchanting passages of colour and workmanship in these panels, notably in the sleeping figures in the cornfield (No. 3).

After Delacroix I should have gone to Daumier, since his synthetic outlook upon art and nature classes him nearer the great Romantic movement, to which he is more akin than to Millet even, and his contemporaries. Between Daumier and Millet, however, was an interchange of influence, unconscious in each case. This is illustrated by the little picture "La Lavandière" (No. 14). It is famous, and counts among Daumier's most highly finished pictures, though it is in a sense an occasional work. The superb panel of lithographs in Room IV. will illustrate better the imaginative force, the synthetic draughtsmanship and tragic vision of this virile artist.

Courbet's portrait of E. Van Wisselingh (No. 9) is of a high order of excellence. The "Still Life" (No. 6) was painted in the prison of St. Pelasgie. The landscape in the next room (No. 67) shows him in a weaker and more habitual aspect. But Courbet must

be judged on his finest works only. In his more occasional efforts he is a link between the art of the mid-century and that of the Impressionists, upon whose early work he exercised a great, an overwhelming influence.

I will reserve Manet's picture "The Absinthe Drinker" (No. 24) for future consideration when we come to his portrait of Faure. It represents a pause in French art, a glance across the border to the Spain of Goya, as it were. If Monticelli counts also in the evolution of later Impressionism, in spirit at least he was with the past, with the Bohemianism of Romanticism. The glitter and musical ambiance of the world of Romance lay for him beneath the sun of Provence and in the gallery of the opera-house. He painted his sparkling little pictures in a garret, closed out by a crimson curtain from the squalor and temptations of the street. The tiny festival of gem-like colour (No. 18) was perhaps painted in exchange for the mere pittance which was necessary for absinthe, which might blot out the tyranny of the moment and bring freedom from care. No man could say more truly of his art, "*Mon mal, j'enchanter!*"

I would reserve the art of Fantin for the consideration of Room IV., though he is here with three exquisite minor works. On one side of his art he was the contemporary of Manet, Legros, Whistler, and an influence on Renoir; on the other he belongs to the Romantic movement. He was among the few young men with whom Millet liked to talk about the great Italians. In fact his place is apart, not entirely with any movement. He was at once a spectator and a friend of "art movements."

ROOM II

IN the year 1810 France lay still in the fetters of the Classical movement inaugurated by David, to which the Revolution and Napoleon had given prominence. The Classicism of Carstens and David has hardly ever touched England, and the early years of the nineteenth century find our school well on in the development of what is now considered modern art. Goya, the great Spaniard, whose portrait of Gasparini (No. 69) hangs in this room, influences France, not England. I will reserve him for the discussion of Room IV.

Survivors from the previous century were still at work in the England of 1810. J. Hoppner dies in this year. A fine specimen of his work hangs here (No. 68). Far more than his contemporary Raeburn he shows the last trace of the Reynolds tradition still entire, deprived, however, of its intellectual force and variety.

The unusually fine specimen by Raeburn (No. 72) belongs in a sense still to the previous epoch. It shows the painter's unfailing technical ease, and little of his monotony of method. If Raeburn was a surer draughtsman than his great predecessors Reynolds and Gainsborough, he did not inherit the princely spirit, the superb taste and range of Reynolds, nor was he even conscious of the indefinable quality of grace which is almost a spiritual element in the pictures of Gainsborough.

However, the sound prose of Raeburn has its place in British painting; and this picture shows more—it has freshness and charm of a high order.

Power, ease, grace, how many of these qualities fall to the lot of Lawrence, and what is his place within the two periods or epochs that admired his work? If we can praise Raeburn's technical assurance, what shall we say of the unbounded skill of Lawrence, and of those chance flashes of power and insight he has put into his portraits of the Pope, the Cardinal, and other superb paintings of men? Later Victorians have endorsed Thackeray's verdict on him, that he was "The tawdry and delicious Lawrence," and this is true of many of his vivacious portraits of women. A fine work (No. 31), showing him at the top of his gift as a painter, purposes to represent the vivacious Lady Betty Foster, immortalised by Reynolds. The dress of this girl is that of 1810–1814. I fear she has grown too young to be the charming sitter of the great Sir Joshua. A brilliant unfinished portrait of Lady Blessington (No. 71) makes one pause in one's estimate of Lawrence as a woman's painter. I have the feeling that something feminine in the character of the painter gave him a feminine view of women, in which pleasantness of expression and the genius of the hairdresser count too much. Before this dazzling painting all this becomes untrue, and this sketch would take its place in the National Portrait Gallery near that astounding unfinished portrait of Wilberforce, which is one of his masterpieces.

More than once the great name of Turner has found its way into these pages, each time with the sense that he is almost absent from a place where he should have been at his strongest, for one fine picture only (No. 70), illustrating as it does but a phase of his life-work, is here to represent him. Fortunately,

the set of water-colours in Room IV. will in part atone for this flaw in the Exhibition. It is probably but little known how many of the masterpieces by Turner shown at the Guildhall eleven years ago have now left the country, proving again that if we can no longer hope to retain the more famous works of the old masters, and if modern English painting often goes abroad, the accumulated inheritance of our great English masters must follow also. The mere pride of possession, failing other finer reasons, such as our debt to the future, has gone out of the Englishman's character of to-day.

It is a reassuring exception to this fact to note the increasing interest in an English artist, not consecrated by South African and American prices, Blake, namely, and that an unrivalled collection has been formed in recent years by Mr. Graham Robertson, from whose walls most of the specimens here included have been chosen. Blake's unique place in the British School belongs in the main to the field of the graphic arts, yet two of his best paintings hang here, "The Bard" (No. 57) and "The Vampire" (No. 59), both ambitious in aim and method, both notable for a larger measure of success than was always at the command of this singular and unequal man. The admirable water-colour "Job tormented by Satan" (No. 58), and the magnificent coloured print "Elijah in the Chariot of Fire" (No. 60), are perfect specimens of what Blake could realise at his best, within his more habitual practice as an imaginative or visionary draughtsman. Blake died in 1827; he therefore predeceases Lawrence; but his place is with a later ideal of art; he has acted at times as a stimulus or power of suggestion upon Watts, and perhaps even Rodin. We owe his rehabilitation mainly to Rossetti. It would be difficult to imagine separate tributes from minds of greater variety.

If the epoch between 1830 and 1850 may be considered a period of transition notable only in the development of Turner's and Wilkie's later work (who is represented only by a superb set of drawings in Room No. IV.), many elements were at work which were to bear fruit later. The consideration of the great sculptor-painter and designer Alfred Stevens must be made later, before the wall devoted mainly to his drawings and small sculpture studies in Room IV. ; though a specimen of his rare painting, an unfinished sketch, hangs (No. 37) on the wall devoted to Watts. The end of the forties was to witness the advent of a new group of artists, since become famous as the Pre-Raphaelites. The consideration of this extraordinary school can be made here on some of the most typical specimens of their work. Lewis, who in a sense counts in the evolution of their method, is after all a minor master ; he will be found in Room No. IV. With Etty the last of the Lawrence tradition flickers out. He is represented by two sketches Nos. 65 and 66. On the whole our estimate of this underrated little master rests on his sketches and studies, which have a greater vogue in France than in England.

Within its self-imposed conditions Pre-Raphaelitism might be described as the emphasis of the aspect of things which had become possible in an age whose eyesight had been modified by science. This ideal was in itself not far removed from that of certain great Florentines, and a scrupulous study of the minutest facts had been continuous in the art of the primitive Flemings. Delacroix, who lived to see specimen works of the English Pre-Raphaelites and to praise them highly, was quick to perceive the relation between the old art of Flanders and the new, dry English School, as it was then called. With that nimbleness and clearness of perception which seems

characteristic of great Frenchmen, he recognised that if the earlier British School had in a sense developed upon the traditions of Rubens and Vandyck, who were Flemings, the new school had not swerved from the same Northern source of technical inspiration. Other elements escaped his analysis; these he rightly considered new; remained one other of which he could have no knowledge—*i.e.*, the source of the imaginative impulse behind these works. If the Church had inspired the Flemish primitives, a new religious fervour touched Pre-Raphaelitism also, but with the exception of Holman Hunt this was transitory, not essential to the success or character of the movement; it was perhaps merely a part of the improvised mediæval scheme which Chatterton had played with, and in so doing brought English thought to a new knowledge of itself. Pre-Raphaelitism owes a debt to Keats; it has benefited by the poignant vision of nature which he has revealed during those few years in which he lived.

The love of analysis, the power to transmute facts into something more, the brilliant self-confidence of youth, its noble scrupulousness and feeling of wonder, can be found in Pre-Raphaelitism. Delacroix said of it, "This art is young and we in France are very old."

It was the influence of Keats that sweetened for a while the stubborn Protestant outlook of Holman Hunt, in whom the mystical fervour and sense of fact of a new John Bunyan seems once more among us. Beyond doubt, Hunt's example was a bracing one upon the school. His "Hireling Shepherd" (No. 42) is perhaps his most typical or admirable work—it is a priceless specimen of British thought and art. He has been described as the conscience of the movement; he was certainly its founder. Late in life Madox Brown hugged the idea that to his early efforts should be ascribed the origin of Pre-

Raphaelitism. Without Hunt and Rossetti, Madox Brown would never have painted pictures which one might consider Pre-Raphaelite; at the most he would have remained preoccupied with analogous efforts and experiments in Flanders and Germany to renounce ripe colour, free brush-work, and rich shadows. His "Christ washing the Feet of Peter" (No. 40), the exquisite little picture "Waiting" (No. 61), show him at his best and as a technical follower of Hunt. The more delicate skill, the greater nimbleness and sensitiveness of eye and mind, make of J. E. Millais the more constantly successful exponent of Pre-Raphaelitism in its first phase. The "Ferdinand and Ariel" (No. 48) is extreme in its tendencies; it is less important than the incomparable "Ophelia" or "The Carpenter's Shop;" less emotional in vision than "The Eve of St. Agnes" or the "Autumn Leaves." It is, however, typical of early Pre-Raphaelite tendencies; it is nearer Keats than Shakespeare, which it illustrates, nearer to Chatterton than to Keats, more wholly English in temper, since Italy counts in Shakespeare and Greece with Keats.

Under the influence of Rossetti, the greatest of them all, the new brotherhood was to achieve more than is compassed by Hunt in the "Hireling Shepherd," or by Millais in the "Ferdinand and Ariel." If their works are intense and passionate in their hold upon outward things, they are in a sense incidental. The central impulse is narrative, and with Hunt it is didactic.

Rossetti brought to the movement a keener sense of design, which marshals facts into a more memorable whole, and that tragic sense which is ever present in the finest poetic invention. With him the scientific conscience, which delighted Ruskin, was to loose its hold upon the movement. Some

of Rossetti's priceless water-colours exhibited here summarise that new combination of reality and imagination which always underlies the finest art. With Rossetti the balance may often have swerved too much towards the imaginative, the rarer half of art, and too little towards the study of nature; on this point I am unable and unwilling to judge. The "Arthur's Tomb" (No. 44) is one of those priceless things which defy analysis. Part of its force may reside in what might seem at first sight the more whimsical part of it, endow the figure of Guinevere with greater reality—*i.e.*, the traces of maturity and sensuality—and perhaps the lurching, questioning, and impassioned man with his tragic face might lose the pathos of contrast. The quaint details of the tomb, the grass like "new-cleft emeralds," the splashes of light and the green shadows from the leaves, add to the sense of vividness and to the sense of strangeness of the picture, to the sense of something poignant yet remote, like one's childhood. This visionary work has all the intensity of music, it tells of far-off tragic things, and of passion that passes, of beauty that endures, perhaps! Like music, it is at once ironic and compassionate. Out of this water-colour William Morris evolved his quaint and moving poem "King Arthur's Tomb."

The first design for the Llandaff triptych (No. 47) counts in the first line of Rossetti's early designs. The little "Borgia" (No. 46) shows also the painter's inventive faculties in their full flower. The larger version of this design at Kensington is later, and not entirely by his hand. The "Beatrice and Dante" (No. 43), the "Belle Dame Sans Merci" (No. 50), are each jewels of colour, design, and invention. The admirable series of Rossetti's drawings in the End Gallery will further illustrate the period in his career when invention and a racy power of

execution went together. For the most part all these works fall within the space of seven years ; they typify what the French call "the School of Oxford" thereby indicating the second phase of Pre-Raphaelitism, when the influence of Rossetti became paramount on a younger generation made memorable by Burne-Jones and William Morris. A record of this charmed epoch can still be seen in the famous St. Frideswide window at Oxford. The two lovely panels (Nos. 39 and 52) are slightly later in date. If the colour is jewelled and almost toylike in the Oxford windows, here it is different in scheme, and we have instead dim, broken colours, the tones of goblin woods and of tapestries seen in twilight. They are perfect specimens of narrative art tinged with that plaintive sweetness which Burne-Jones has brought to English art. The "Temperentia" (No. 41) and the "Caritas" (No. 49) also revert in design to later Oxford windows. The broken golds and faded ivories of the "Temperentia" gleam on the golden wall with the effect of old cloth-of-gold or gold-dust ; this singular gift, of which Burne-Jones had the secret, belongs to "The Depths of the Sea" (No. 45). In novelty of design, personality in workmanship, originality of aspect, it stands on a level which current criticism is perhaps powerless to analyse, since originality and personality have often to be allowed to countless works without one tithe of these qualities revealed by Burne-Jones—revealed, in fact, in varying degrees, by all these priceless Pre-Raphaelite pictures.

The time has perhaps hardly come to do full justice to the great gifts of G. F. Watts. He has not been the subject of recent rehabilitation, like his great contemporary A. Stevens. We find him alone during his long life steadily pursuing a lofty and complex ideal, valuing his wisdom, while dis-

counting his great technical powers. To all he remains a large and gentle figure, in soul a contemporary of Phidias, in fact, a Victorian and a contemporary of Browning, a great modern, at once praised and misrepresented by his contemporaries, and possibly never quite understood even by his admirers, like the musician Brahms. The "Ariadne" (No. 33) is a later work of extraordinary power and beauty; it was the subject of savage attack at the time of its production by the London Press, which too often tries to write about art with a Parisian accent. It is curious to note that a good early portrait by the Impressionist Renoir hangs near, without shocking our sense of colour-harmony, upon this wall which is dominated by the more original and varied art of Watts, who, we have been assured, lived only to say over again what has been said before: Alas that beauty of feeling, originality in design, an exigent standard of workmanship should often count for so little against chance efforts and experimental studies! Like Rossetti, like Burne-Jones, Watts has endowed English art with great pictures which reveal that vision and experience with which great minds enrich our outlook upon life; worlds of emotion, memory, and experience, which link the past with the present, full of messages for our time and the future, which help to build up that which endures most, the art and emotional thought of the race. Ariadne is here holding the scarlet thread on which her fate depends; she is waiting, wistful and mysterious, utterly a woman, and ripe like the autumn air. The fine canvas No. 34 shows Watts painting in a more central phase of his practice; there is a resonance or prolonged vibration in the colour, which is comparable to the qualities a fine musician is able to wring out of a violin; by comparison, the sharp greens and fresh touch of

Courbet (No. 67) seem like the harsh, flat tones of a piano-organ.

We must now turn to a very different order of ambition and achievement and consider the two important pictures by Manet, and, for the moment, leave English art at its best for a later phase of French painting, which has influenced, not France only, but most European schools of to-day.

Courbet brought into fashion the practice of direct painting from nature, which Constable and Corot had used mainly for their studies. At the start of Impressionism the influence of Courbet was paramount. It may be said never wholly to have left Manet; even some of Manet's latest pictures could hang next to Courbet's and pass at first sight as separate specimens by the same painter. Manet was nimbler in touch, more delicate in his sense of pigment. The best works of Courbet are views of everyday nature from which movement and air has to some extent been excluded. A sense of movement and air is rarely absent from the work of Manet. "The Absinthe Drinker" (No. 24) is an early effort, with a touch of that romantic exaggeration which is due to a love of Spanish art; it has a more telling pattern than a picture by Courbet; there is something about it of the bravura of some latter-day Italian—Crespi for instance; while the important picture of Faure in the character of Hamlet (No. 88) is under the spell of Velazquez's famous "Pablillos de Valladolid."

To dispense in a picture with the building up of effect by conventional shadows, to seek after the freshness and sharpness of local colour under common effects of light, to give at all cost an immediate sense of reality, such was the general programme of Manet. Compared with the elaborate methods of the descriptive realistic literature of France, this point of view has the sense of actuality of the better kind of

French journalism. Later, the study of the decomposition of colour under sunlight has absorbed the Impressionists. With this, the art of Manet was hardly ever concerned; Impressionism to-day has developed into a new academic tyranny not less exclusive or exigent than that of David. But of this fault Manet is to some extent free; he was a student of the Masters; his charming "*Déjeuner sur l'Herbe*" was founded in design on a print by Marc Antonio after the antique; his "*Olympia*" is at once allied to Ingres and Goya. He counts in France as a personal, and above all a reactionary, force against the tyranny of French official art, for which we have no parallel in England. To draw with the brush and not merely to fill in has characterised most English painting. Pre-Raphaelitism, which fore-swore all lax, or even free brush-work, allowed a frankness of colour-pitch which has only been possible in France in recent years. Glance across the room at the Pre-Raphaelites, and at Watts, from them glance once more into the first room; most of the French pictures are brown or grey by comparison. Glance again at the sober early English pictures of Hoppner and Lawrence, and you will perceive that their gloom is golden, that countless colour chords and transitions in tone pulse below the surfaces, and that the freshness of later French painting, that of Mlle. Morisot for instance (No. 89), is allied to that of new cotton stuffs. Yet this picture belongs also to what I would describe as the non-academic phase of Impressionism; it is a charming early example of a delicate lesser talent. The Renoir (No. 36) is an exceptional specimen of a much stronger craftsman before he had lapsed into decadence due to physical causes, and that over-insistence upon personal limitations which I have heard described as the secret of French Impressionism.

Whistler stands in England for Impressionism, though he himself was shy of the definition. His early debt to Courbet soon counts for little in the development of his personality; he followed French thought at a distance, along charming by-paths of endeavour, with something wayward in his mood at once touched with melancholy and irony and a sense of disillusion which has often characterised the dandy and the wit. Whistler was all this; he was something more, a man gifted with a delicate sense of beauty; and none of these qualities belonged to Courbet, who was heavy and childish in his egotism, heavy and without humour or tenderness in his art, and a master painter in the same sense in which we speak of a master mason. The delicacy and wit of Manet was also different in character from that of Whistler. The spell of Whistler's art has lost its hold upon more recent criticism. His æstheticism is too recent, more recent even than that of the Grosvenor Gallery.

Whistler has defined art as the spirit of isolation. To him it remained closed to the vulgar; both nature and art stood behind a veil, remote and impalpable. He did not paint the world, but a dim appearance of it. His women are on the point of gliding back into the black mirrors from which they have emerged at the bidding of a conjurer. The nocturne (No. 87) might represent a congress of ghosts or the sudden appearance of dim, bodiless dresses endowed for a moment with a wraith-like life in a garden shaded by ghostly trees, yet this is Cremorne in the days when it throbbed to the elegant melody of "Tommy make room for your uncle." Leyland, the great art patron, is to be found in this picture, but those who saw it painted are powerless to point him out, and the work might well illustrate instead the haunting lines of Verlaine:

Leurs yeux sont morts et leurs lèvres sont molles,
Et l'on entend à peine leurs paroles ;
Dans le vieux parc solitaire et glacé
Deux spectres ont évoqué le passé.
—Qu'il était bleu, le ciel, et grand l'espoir !
—L'espoir a fui, vaincu, vers le ciel noir.

Conventional reasons render it undesirable that I should praise my contemporaries. I shall, however, make an exception over the masterpieces of Rodin, and revert to his work after a survey of the drawings in the End Gallery, which illustrate even more thoroughly than the pictures the sequence in the development of the arts during the nineteenth century.

END GALLERY. DRAWINGS AND PRINTS

FUSELI AND ROLANDSON

Nos. 123, 124 carry one back to the eighteenth century. An element of licentiousness, broad and good-humoured in the case of Rolandson, less so with Fuseli, characterised the work of both men. This, however, is not too apparent in the semi-satirical drawings which represent Fuseli (Nos. 119, 121).

BLAKE

Blake's mystical and lyrical tendencies are illustrated by one of his masterpieces, "The River of Life" (No. 127). It is perhaps the loveliest effort of his pencil, and quite the equal, in its charm, to anything in his immortal poems, "The Songs of Innocence." The wonderful little print No. 128 is one of the most memorable and typical things in the Exhibition; it has a Dantesque quality in its grandeur and simplicity of vision.

PRUDHON

From Blake to Prudhon there is a world of space—that which separates Orcagna, for instance, from Correggio! Two of the three drawings representing him (Nos. 131, 132) are typical of his method as a draughtsman; they show the spectral or moonlight

effect in which Prudhon placed the minor deities of Greece, or perhaps I should say Pompeii.

GOYA

Goya once said: "Give me a piece of charcoal and I will paint you a picture." His superb lithographs and etchings prove that this was no vain boast. All the specimens here belong to the later years of his life. No. 143 is in a sense more typical, not finer, than the others. It might have been executed at any time of his long career. Spain with all its strange blending of sombre power and sensuality is here, besides a fund of bitter gaiety which is his and not Spanish. Something of the sardonic spirit of Swift lurks beneath the irony and laughter of this artist, who was the contemporary of Mengs, Fragonard, and David, who, as a painter, falls at times below the weakest of these contemporaries. But his strength lay in other things. As a designer of prints he has few rivals, and but one greater than he—Rembrandt, namely. If it has been said that Balzac was an "epoch," not a man, this is also true of Goya; he summarises the epoch of the Revolution.

INGRES

It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast than that which exists between the great Spaniard and Ingres, the great French Academician—the tumultuous and irregular power of the first and the strenuous self-control of the second. In the art of Ingres all things had to be governed by the laws of proportion and the sense of rhythm, beauty and reason being one. Ingres studied form with something of the temper of a great mathematician, but subjected his studies to the standard set by the lyrical art of Raphael. Here are three of his noted

portrait studies in pencil, No. 145 being one of his masterpieces. These precious, exquisite, and meticulous little portraits reveal him under the aspect of his practice which modern criticism values most; to me his fine studies of the nude count for more, but they are preserved almost solely in France, nor are they likely to leave it. Ingres as a painter is absent from this Exhibition, and we must give up all hope of seeing him represented even in an English public gallery. The time for this is past. The time is passing away also for other great moderns.

TURNER

Three phases of Turner's maturity are illustrated in this gallery. The "Morpeth," executed for the *Liber Studiorum* (No. 147), the "Montjen" (No. 148), for the "Rivers of France," and the exquisite "River Scene" (No. 149) are separate specimens of his development. The "Colchester" (No. 150) is famous. In all these we can note the gradual change in his workmanship from the explicit statement of facts to an imaginative revaluation of them, from the "Morpeth" to the "River Scene."

CONSTABLE

Next to Turner, illustrated adequately but not fully, we shall note a magnificent study of a tree by Constable. This fulfils unusual conditions rarely attempted by this master in his drawings; it has an air of some Japanese or Chinese masterpiece, and would not be out of place among the epical works by Hokusai, Nos. 274, 279.

HOKUSAI

The reader must retrace his steps to Screen I., where six drawings illustrate the uncanny gift of this

great Japanese. The contemporary of Goya and Turner, Hokusai acted not only as an example in his own country, but as a stimulus upon the art of Europe. Two of these drawings, Nos. 275, 279, figure in microscopic form in the *Mangwa*. The others are later, and recall something in the art of Signorelli, and even Dürer.

WILKIE

The drawings by Wilkie hang on these walls out of their order of production, since he is outlived by Turner and Ingres. Before this superb set of his drawings one is amazed at the thoughtlessness with which this fine artist has been allowed to slip, as it were, out of our reckoning. How many people have noticed his two superb studies for the *Tippo Saib* at the Albert and Victoria Museum? To all students of drawings this fine set should come as a delight, perhaps even as a surprise; I for one did not know that one could rely on so constant a level of draughtsmanship in this skilful "narrateur." The "Study of a Girl" (No. 162) could be placed next to a masterpiece by Ingres, or even Watteau.

DELACROIX

If there is no hope that Ingres will some day be represented in the National Gallery, this may also be prophesied of Delacroix, despite the mass of minor works still at times to be found in French collections and sales. Delacroix executed hundreds of pencil sketches, of which these are on the whole typical specimens. His rare attempts in a more searching or explicit manner of draughtsmanship are rare even in France. No. 166 shows one of his designs as it was finally carried out. No. 169 and No. 168 are very different from the ultimate design; the latter

resulted in a small but famous picture in which a dying Arab is drinking from a pool.

DAUMIER, GAVARNI

It would be difficult to match in the life-work of Daumier the superb and in a sense exceptional design "The Fall of Sodom" (No. 173). It shows this great but irregular artist in an imaginative phase of his art, which circumstances prevented him from fully developing. The five famous political lithographs which surround it show a tragic force combined with the faculty of characterisation which is rare. "La Rue Transnonain," "Le Ventre législatif," are masterpieces! Daumier's famous rival, Gavarni, hangs on another wall. Despite the dramatic lithograph No. 190 and the astonishing skill of No. 192, Gavarni's work is of infinitely slighter significance, and, by comparison, a delightful incident only in the art of his time.

BARYE

Barye is another man of the same great race as Delacroix, Hokusai, and Daumier. The small bronzes, Nos. 338 and 339, are too incidental to convey his rank as a sculptor. The water-colour, No. 179, is on the whole representative, but not an exceptional work; the superb tracing of two tigers fighting is almost a summary of the character of his art; it has the strange vividness of a drawing by Barye's great Japanese contemporary, Hokusai.

COROT

One is again reminded of Japan, but more still of Italy, the Italy of Titian, in the drawing by Corot, No. 176, though it is at the same time typical

of the master, whose drawings are, however, very rarely of the importance of this one. The two etchings are perhaps even more representative. They might stand for Corot, were his paintings to become lost.

J. F. MILLET

Millet's two finest etchings, Nos. 181 and 187, are here. The drawings are on the whole racy but slighter specimens of his draughtsmanship.

T. H. ROUSSEAU

The superb drawing "La Forêt," No. 207, is almost a summary of Rousseau's art; it is a "museum piece."

ALFRED STEVENS

Few English artists are now more readily accepted than Stevens. The fine panel of his drawings, and the charming sketches in plaster and bronze (Nos. 333-337), reveal him as a master of the ripe Renaissance working with the same fertility and assurance as some later Florentine of that great period of human energy and power. Nos. 194, 197 are preparatory sketches for the partially executed decoration of St. Paul's. No. 198 was done for the bronze gates, never executed, for the Geological Museum. No. 196 is probably for a picture, perhaps "Macbeth and the Witches." The ultimate destination of the other studies is less certain.

LEWIS, RUSKIN

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LEWIS, RUSKIN

The placing of Lewis and Ruskin together is interesting. Both are delicate and allied talents who to-day have passed into partial obscurity. Lewis, on the whole, deserved a more important

display of his work. The case of Ruskin is different. Even to his admirers No. 211 must come as a surprise. It could hold its own next to the finest drawing or etching by Whistler.

CHIFFLART

Few art-lovers will remember this name. The three powerful etchings, Nos. 212, 214, 215, show him as a designer of singular force. Poverty and neglect did their utmost for this man. His mural decorations were destroyed with the demolition of one of the great universal exhibitions during the Second Empire. These prints recall Carpeaux and the draughtsmen of Fontainebleau; they are at once Italian and French in character.

MERYON

All the etchings here are too well known to need comment. No. 217 alone will seem strange to those who forget that this exact architectural draughtsman had another side to his life, and that in his moments of insanity a separate personality emerged that a delicate, fantastic gift became apparent and Meryon dotted his plates with strange and exquisite figures. In this reconstruction of the Lycée "Henry IV." the mountains of New Zealand loom at the horizon, the Pacific and its craft float up to the walls of Paris, and a centaur and a child play in the foreground.

THE PRE-RAPHAELITES

I find it difficult to add to what I have already said before their pictures concerning the art of the Pre-Raphaelites. This collection of drawings by which they are represented here is equally important; perhaps it is even more representative. Madox

Brown is on the whole well represented, but he has left no such series of drawings as his younger contemporaries. The same is true of Holman Hunt; his drawing for his famous picture "Claudio and Isabella" (No. 223) is a fortunate exception; it stands alone in his life-work, and makes one wonder how it came to be almost unique among his drawings in the delicacy and force of its workmanship. The young Pre-Raphaelite Deverel stood for the Claudio.

Despite the countless designs done for illustration, Millais' Pre-Raphaelite drawings are rare. One of the best is fortunately here. It has the further interest of bearing upon one of his most remarkable works, namely, "The Carpenter's Shop." No. 225 has the merit of belonging to this charmed epoch; it is, however, of a more occasional character. I do not think this design was ever carried out in more definite form.

It would be difficult to find grouped together a more notable set of Rossetti's early pen-drawings outside Birmingham, and perhaps the Print Room of the British Museum. The portrait of Miss Siddal (Mrs. Rossetti) (No. 227) has few equals among the many exquisite drawings Rossetti did of her. For dramatic intensity Nos. 230 and 231 are hard to match. No. 229 was done in preparation for the "Beatrice and Dante" panels painted for W. Morris. Remains the famous pen-drawing of "Magdalene at the Door of Simon the Pharisee" (No. 228), for which the artist wrote the sonnet beginning

Why wilt thou cast the roses from thine hair?
Nay, be thou all a rose—wreath, lips, and cheek.

Burne-Jones sat for the Head of Christ; the head of Swinburne is recalled in the principal reveller, and a

fine study made for this figure, probably in view of a larger work, hangs next to it (No. 226). For years this famous pen-drawing had vanished, and was supposed lost. It has therefore never before been publicly exhibited. It was found some twelve years ago by the present owners in a furniture shop in the Brompton Road, and secured by them a few minutes after it had been taken there.

The friends of Rossetti have been unanimous in praising the artistic gifts of Miss Siddal, whose exquisite presence and personality have found a record in many of her husband's choicest works and in the "Ophelia" by Millais. The tender little design "The Quest of the Grail" (No. 232) is here to speak of her as an artist. There is something at once remote and ethereal in its conception which has delighted us in "The River of Life" of William Blake. Shall I say it shows a swift and bird-like grace? I don't know if this can be said, and to admit it has "the lyric touch" leaves me unsatisfied; this is usually conceded to thin poetry of which nothing else can be said.

Concerning Burne-Jones I am again at a loss to say what is not infinitely better expressed by the beautiful drawings before us. "The Backgammon Players" (No. 236) is, of its kind, difficult to match. Three exquisite contemporary drawings hang near, Nos. 234, 235, 239. The two designs by William Morris are at once typical of his draughtsmanship and faculties as a designer; his original works of this type at least are seldom seen: they must be left to speak for themselves.

PUVIS DE CHAVANNES

Outside the Luxembourg, with its unrivalled set of large "Sanguines" by Puvis de Chavannes, it would be difficult to group together another series of equal

importance of this rare type of Puvis' drawings. No. 244 was made, like another fine "Sanguine" for the same work in the possession of M. Bonnat, for the wall-painting "Le Travail" at Amiens. The three remaining drawings bear on a picture, "La Vendange," which seems to exist to-day only in a small sketch; some of the figures, however, have been utilised (with modifications) in the vast design "Salve Picardia Nutrix" at Amiens. Here is epical art, if I may use the term, and the realisation of the immortal spirit of the Golden Age in thought and form. These drawings are monumental in character, and at once suave and austere. They partly console us for the absence of one of his decorative paintings. This grave fault in the representative character of the Exhibition is shared, however, by the greater number of the museums of Europe.

MENZEL

An exception to the rule of the Exhibition was made over Hokusai. His influence on contemporary art was the justification for this departure. His rival in influence, Hiroshigi, is absent, owing to the impossibility of finding space for him; his, however, was a lesser talent. Menzel is another exception. Since the "Nazarene" movement he is the only German who has counted outside his own country as a stimulus upon European art. His influence is not to be found among the greater men. His was not a revolutionary force like that of Constable, for instance; yet it should not be overlooked. He is, in a sense, the father of modern book-illustration. His later contemporary Charles Keene, and the generation which counted Houghton and Pinwell, owed something to him. Outside Germany his drawings are rarely met. I believe the Print Room

of the British Museum is without them. Three of his searching drawings are here.

KEENE

I have not the space at my disposal to discuss C. Keene's influence or that of Menzel upon France. The set of his drawings shows him to be one of our best character-draughtsmen—the best since Wilkie—though they illustrate on the whole a more occasional and delicate aspect of his talent in which he approaches Whistler.

WHISTLER

Whistler might be described as a "visionary realist," but, like all definitions, it would exclude a portion of his achievement, and raise up questions as to the sense in which the word "visionary" can be used. The fine panel of his etchings represents him in closer contact with fact than do his paintings. This has probably led to their common acceptance even by the professed print-collector. The latter is often the first cousin of the stamp-collector, who is lured by rarity and other mechanical mysteries. Whistler's etchings, however, possess a delicate and racy use of line which allows them to be classed among the finer transcripts from nature shown in this room.

LEGROS

With the exception of a fine drawing (No. 272), the works by Legros represent but do not absolutely illustrate the scope of this master's work. A better idea of his art can be got from the fine picture (No. 63) in Room II.

BEARDSLEY, CONDER

It seems but yesterday that both these men were our contemporaries. They have been dead but a few years, and yet their work has become a delightful thing of the past to which we look back with regret. Beardsley's *Salome* drawings have counted enormously in the Continental conception of Wilde's masterpiece; without them it is more than probable that Strauss' musical translation of the play would somehow have been different.

Conder's "colour-gift" is an event of which we have also not yet grasped the significance. To this he added a curious vein of fancy, so removed from our insular thought that one wonders if some fairy godmother did not change a British child for a French one. The Gallicised changeling is probably to-day painting fashionable portraits, or else on the Stock Exchange, whilst Conder remained here to conjure up glimpses of a mythical eighteenth century in which Fragonard has become Court painter to Queen Mab.

RODIN

On Screen II. we shall notice seven drawings by this great master of "Living Stone," to use the magnificent expression of the Renaissance. These alone would be sufficient to make one realise his tragic power and force of invention. The series of masterpieces in Room III. surpasses anything of its kind yet seen in England. There is a haunting quality in "The Age of Bronze" (No. 76); and in beauty of line and surface-modelling it would be hard to equal it in modern times. Before the amazing power and vitality displayed in No. 75 we are thankful that it was cast before it had crumbled away in the master's studio. One can

understand that the artist had this fragment enlarged to colossal proportions, when it looked like some relic of a Titanic past. No. 73 and No. 79 illustrate once again that tenderness and strength characterise the greatest art, and that a sense of pity or tragedy is often an element in the keenest and most intimate perception of beauty. All these qualities converge in "The Age of Bronze." We find them again in "L'Eternelle Idole" (No. 114). This is a thing so delicate that skill-less words might only smutch the candour and tenderness of its conception. Before it one remembers the august words of an ancient book full of wonder at "The way of a serpent upon a rock, the way of an eagle in the air, and the way of a man with a maid."

POSTSCRIPT

In the haste with which these notes were written I had lost sight of the delicate work of Frank Potter. In point of date he belongs, like Pinwell, to the generation which followed on the Pre-Raphaelite movement. In his choice of subject-matter he was probably influenced by some early works of Whistler's—"Before the Mirror" and "At the Piano," for instance. It is now more than twenty years ago that Whistler organised an exhibition of Potter's work; since then they have only occasionally been seen. Failure, and with it poverty, and even starvation, each had done its worst for the artist when twenty-four years ago a friend exhibited No. 64 in the Grosvenor Gallery. Potter mustered the shilling to see it. Between this early work and the man lay all the years which had led out into that desert of dead endeavour from which no one returns, so he went home and shot himself.